



Ramsey County Sheriff's Office

Bob Fletcher, Sheriff

Office of the Sheriff

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July 18, 2019

Scott A. Williams
Deputy County Manager, Safety and Justice Service Team/
Director of Emergency Communications
Ramsey County
388 13th Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101

Mr. Williams,

This letter is in response to our phone conversation on July 12. At that time, you stated your finance personnel had estimated that the Sheriff's Office would be \$2,300,000 over on the 2019 budget by the end of the year. This shortfall figure is consistent with the estimated range I forwarded you via letter on March 11, 2019. At that time, I estimated that due to excessive hiring in 2018 by the previous sheriff's administration, our budget was destined to be over by \$2.3 to \$3.1 million. On the day I took office (January 7, 2019), the Sheriff's Office was 33 full-time employees over the budgeted allotment; 28 of those positions were from excessive and unauthorized hiring by the previous administration. A copy of my March 11, 2019 letter is attached.

As you recall, on April 8 our staff met with you, the Finance Department, and Human Resources to discuss the projected shortfall. Your staff agreed that there had been significant over-hiring by the previous sheriff's administration. You also agreed that the previous over-hiring of correctional officers should not negatively impact our ability to properly conduct law enforcement operations. At that time, I stated that I would employ a strategy of moving correctional officers to vacant sworn deputy positions to lower the correctional officer overages. As you know, we have begun the transition process. Our current estimate for 2019, based on spending through June 30, is a budget overage of \$1.3 to \$2.0 million. I believe the eventual number will be close to \$1 million; however, the 2018 hiring overages will take time to eliminate. Below is a table of the FTE staffing complement for December 31, 2019 and June 30, 2019.

Staffing Complement Comparison

Over-hired Positions	As of January 8, 2019	As of June 30, 2019
	FTE Overage	FTE Overage
Correctional Staff	20	18
Support/Clerical Staff	6	2
Sworn Staff	7	-2
Total	33	18



Much to my surprise, without consulting us, you stated you had instructed the Human Resources Department to not allow us to fill some of our vacancies. Yesterday, they informed us they had received orders from you not to post any additional openings for the Sheriff's Office vacancies. I do not believe you have the lawful authority to prevent a duly elected County Sheriff from filling vacancies authorized in the budget.

Estimated Overage

As I stated in my March 11 letter, I estimated the Sheriff's budget would have a year-end shortfall between \$2.3 million and \$3.1 million based upon hiring decisions made during the previous sheriff's administration. Our current mid-year estimates are between \$1.3 and \$2 million based on our June 30th spending mark and known strategies to reduce the deficit. Below are the midyear spending estimates based on budgeted allotments.

Sheriff's Levy-funded Personnel as of June 30, 2019

As of 6/30	Budget	Expended	Remaining	%
Budget vs. Expense	\$ 41,272,691.00	\$ 21,276,954.74	\$ 9,995,736.26	51.6%

Levy-funded Personnel Projection

Budget	Projection	Over / (Under)
\$ 41,272,691.00	\$ 42,553,909.48	\$ 1,281,218.48

Hiring in 2018 - Separations in 2019

As mentioned above, the excessive hiring by the previous administration in 2018 had resulted in an overage of 33 full-time employees on the day that I took office; 20 of these positions were correctional officers over and above the authorized complement.

At our April 8 meeting you expressed confidence there would be a number of retirements or separations during 2018. I advised you I did not think that would occur since most of the correctional officers did not have enough years on the job to retire. Since our April 8th meeting only 2 correctional officers have retired or separated from the office. During that time we have not hired any new full-time correctional officers. Our correctional FTE overage remains at 18 above the authorized complement. We have been able to reduce the overage of sworn staff through retirements and our complement went from 6 over in January to 2 under on June 30.

Staffing Complement

Job Title	Authorized Positions	Working FTEs	Over / (Under)
Administrative / Professional	54.00	56.00	2.0
Correctional	150.00	168.00	18.0
Law Enforcement	227.80	225.80	(2.0)
Unclassified	13.00	13.00	0.00
Total	444.80	462.80	18.00

**Temporary and Part-time Intermittent Employees**

In our phone conversation you expressed concern regarding the number of new temporary employees that have been hired. A budget analysis of our expenditures as of June 30 reveals that we have spent only \$350,000 of a budgeted 1,100,000 for intermittent and temporary employees. This is well within our budgeted amount. A table is included below:

Temporary & Intermittent Salaries		
Appropriation	Approved Budget	Spent as of 6/30
Salaries Temporary	\$ 404,036.00	\$ 262,210.85
Intermittent Salaries	700,000.00	85,226.27
	\$ 1,104,036.00	\$ 347,437.12
		31.5%

Overtime

We are continuing to work to address the ongoing overtime issue. This issue was aggravated by the previous administration agreeing to a detention center shift bid that allows more people off on weekends than is operationally sound. Consequently, overtime is generated every weekend. We have begun the hiring of intermittent correctional officers to work weekends and reduce overtime. The current contract does not allow us to change the shifts utilized, but we do intend to change the number of persons on each shift at years end during the shift bid to ensure better weekend coverage. As the schedule stands there are numerous extra unneeded personnel in the jail on Mondays and shortages on the weekends. The use of intermittent employees on weekends will reduce overtime and result in a 33% savings for this coverage. The use of intermittent will dramatically reduce jail overtime during the second half of the year.

Summary

This budget overage is the direct result of decisions made in 2018. As I stated in my March 11 letter, the county should have researched how those excessive hiring decisions were made. You were responsible for oversight of the Sheriff's budget in 2018 and you should accept accountability for factors leading us here. It appears you are attempting to redefine the problem so as to not be accountable for decisions under your watch in 2018. I now understand why you showed such little concern in March when I first brought the issue to you. Your acquiescence to the previous sheriff's administration excessive hiring raises questions regarding your competence and/or political ties to the previous administration.

Furthermore, it appears your latest actions to interfere with Sheriff's Office operations are a continuation of a pattern of hostile behavior towards the Sheriff's Office over the past six months. This includes your threatening statement to Chief Deputy Metusalem claiming that "nothing will put us on a war footing faster" with regard to our responsiveness to media requests relating to our efforts to help the homeless during the polar vortex.

As I mentioned at our April 11 meeting, I intend to have the budget and staffing at the appropriate levels by years end. We are taking steps to ensure the number of full-time employees is reduced to the actual authorized complement in each category. At the same time I am not willing to sacrifice the important public safety initiatives that the voters expect me to implement.

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Bob Fletcher, Sheriff



Page 4

Please instruct the Human Resource Department to return to their normal professional manner of assisting the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Fletcher".

Bob Fletcher
Sheriff

Copy: Ryan O'Conner, County Manager
Lee Mehrkens, Finance Director
Gale Blackstone, Human Resources Director
Jennifer Otley, Human Resources Manager
Amy Jannetto, Human Resources Supervisor
Eldona Bacon, Human Resources Generalist